

Mahāyāna Vaipulya Sūtra of Total Retention

Translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in the Sui Dynasty
by
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Thus I have heard:

At one time the [Buddha](#) was staying on the [Grdhrakūṭa Mountain](#), near the capital city [[Rājagṛha](#)], together with a multitude of 62,000 great [bhiksus](#), a multitude of 80 [koṭi Bodhisattva](#)-Mahāsattvas, and sixty koṭi one hundred thousand [upāsakas](#) from the kingdom of [Magadha](#).

At that time, the summer meditation retreat having ended, nearing the time of His [parinirvāṇa](#), the [World-Honored One](#) entered the In-Accord-with-the-Dharma [Samādhi](#). During His samādhi, this [Three-Thousand Large Thousandfold World](#) was everywhere adorned with silky banners and canopies. Jeweled incense vases were well placed and fragrances widely spread. Scattered all about were thousand-petaled lotus blossoms. At that time, in this Three-Thousand Large Thousandfold World, multitudes in the hundreds of thousands of koṭis, [Brahma](#)-kings, and their retinues in the hundreds of thousands of koṭis came to the place where the Buddha was. Upon arrival they bowed down their heads at the feet of the Buddha. With folded palms, facing the Buddha, they stepped back to stand on one side. Also to the place of the Buddha came hundreds of thousands of koṭis of god-sons from [Pure Abode Heavens](#), god-kings Īśvara and Maheśvara, [dragon](#)-kings, [yakṣa](#)-kings, [asura](#)-kings, [garuḍa](#)-kings, [kiṃnara](#)-kings, [mahoraga](#)-kings, together with their respective retinues in the hundreds of thousands of koṭis. Upon arrival they bowed down their heads at the feet of the Buddha. Also to the place where the Buddha was, from the [ten directions](#), came Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas of great awesome virtue, numerous as the sands of the Ganges. Upon arrival they bowed down their heads at the feet of the Buddha. With folded palms, facing the Buddha, they stepped back to stand on one side. Even the gods from the [topmost heaven](#) in this Three-Thousand Large Thousandfold World came to join the huge multitude, which filled the space with no room to spare. Also to the assembly came all the others with great awesome power such as gods, dragons, yakṣas, [gandharvas](#), asuras, garuḍas, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, and others.

At that time the World-Honored One, prompted by the right thought, rose from His samādhi. He looked all over the huge multitude as He stretched His body and opened His mouth. Like a lion king, three times He stretched. Then the World-Honored One extended from His mouth His vast long tongue, covering the entire Three-Thousand Large Thousandfold World. After the [Tathāgata](#) had

finished His display of spiritual power, He again looked at the massive crowd. Then all in the huge multitude rose from their seats. They made obeisance with joined palms and stood in silence. At that time the Buddha told Maitreya Bodhisattva, "Ajita, before long the Tathāgata will enter parinirvāṇa. If you have doubts regarding the [Dharma](#) and would like to ask me, now is the right time while I am still here. Do not allow yourselves to have any distressing regrets after the Buddha is gone."

Then Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva said to the Buddha, "Yes, World-Honored One, You best know Your time. Buddha-Tathāgatas have accomplished the ultimate of all dharmas. I pray only that You will pronounce it, enabling Your [Dharma-eye](#) to stay long in the world."

At that time, in the assembly, the god-sons from Maheśvara Heaven and a multitude of 80 koṭi gods from Pure Abode Heavens, together with their retinues, surrounded the Buddha and bowed down their heads at the feet of the Buddha. Joining their palms reverently, they said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the Mahāyāna Vaipulya Total Retention Dharma Door has been taught in the past by innumerable Buddha-Tathāgatas, who are [Arhats](#), [Samyak-Saṃbuddhas](#). We pray only that the Tathāgata will now also expound it to bring benefits, comfort, and delight to innumerable humans and gods and to enable the Buddha Dharma to abide in the world."

At that time the Buddha approved in silence. Knowing that the Buddha had granted their request, the god-sons from Maheśvara Heaven were joyful and exuberant. Joining their palms, they made obeisance and stepped back to stand on one side. Then the Buddha told Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva, "Ajita, this Mahāyāna Vaipulya Total Retention Dharma Door is not introduced by me only. Innumerable Buddhas of the past, present, and future, in the worlds in the ten directions, have frequently taught it. If there are sentient beings that say that the Buddha's words are not spoken by the Buddha and slander the Dharma and the [Saṅgha](#), these slanderers will go down to the evil [life-paths](#) to undergo hellish sufferings."

At that time the Buddha told Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva, "If, among good men and good women, there are those who have activated their bodhi mind and will accept, uphold, read and recite, as well as explain to others this *Mahāyāna Vaipulya Sūtra of Total Retention*, we should know that these people will not go down to the evil life-paths."

Then the World-Honored One asked Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva, "Ajita, from the night I attained Buddhahood to the time when I will enter the [Nirvāṇa Without Remnant](#), are there evil [karmas](#) resulting from oversights in what has been done, spoken, thought of, and pondered by the Buddha's body,

mouth, and mind?"

Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha said, "Maitreya, as you say, from the time of my attainment of bodhi to the time of my parinirvāṇa, what I have said in this interval is all true, never false. If there are fools who do not understand that the Tathāgata's words are skillful tools and judge that 'this Dharma is this way; this Dharma is not this way,' they are slandering the true Dharma as well as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. I say that they are headed for hell."

The Buddha continued, "Ajita, after my parinirvāṇa, if, in the world of the [five turbidities](#), among bhikṣus, [bhikṣunīs](#), upāsakas, and [upāsikās](#), there are those who are not Bodhisattvas but claim to be Bodhisattvas, they are actually heretics. Because they had made offerings to Buddhas and made their resolve in the past, they have been able to renounce family life under the Buddha's Law. Wherever they go, they have sought fame, benefits, and worship from their kinfolk and friends. They have unscrupulously engaged in impure activities and abandoned their faith. They have not restrained themselves from committing evil acts. They have not subdued their greed for benefits and worship. As for all Dharma Doors and what will produce the firm samādhi, they have stayed far away from and have had no knowledge of them. For the sake of their kinfolk, they have falsely claimed their knowledge and understanding. Standing in flattery and deception, their mouths have spoken contradictory words and their bodies have performed contradictory acts.

"Ajita, in my [Bodhi Way](#) all sentient beings are equal and held in my great compassion. While using good skillful approaches, I never lose the [right mindfulness](#). The Tathāgata, standing peacefully in His unequaled power, expounds the Dharma unimpeded. Suppose there are sentient beings that say these words: 'Bodhisattvas should not study, hear, or accept the sūtras which the Buddha has pronounced to [voice-hearers](#). These are not the true Dharma, nor the right path. Nor should Bodhisattvas study the Pratyekabuddha Dharma.' Suppose they also say, 'Voice-hearers should not hear or accept the Dharmas that Bodhisattvas practice. Nor should voice-hearers hear or accept the [Pratyekabuddha](#) Dharma.' Suppose they also say, 'Whatever Bodhisattvas have to say, voice-hearers and Pratyekabuddhas should not hear or accept.' Their contradictory words and actions are not in accord with the sūtras. They are unable to believe or accept either the true Liberation Dharma or words that are in accord with [reality](#). The followers of their way cannot even be reborn in a heaven, not to mention achieving liberation.

"Ajita, I have expounded the Dharma to and tamed, according to their faith, as many [sentient beings] as the sands of the Ganges. Ajita, even now I

want to go to the worlds in the ten directions to expound the Dharma kindly to sentient beings for their benefit. It is not for those who are not Bodhisattvas but are in the guise of Bodhisattvas. Nor is it for the evil, deceitful ones who, having heard little of the Dharma, double talk in the midst of my Dharma. Suppose the double talker says these words: 'This, Bodhisattvas should study. This, Bodhisattvas should not study.' Having slandered the Buddha, the Dharma, and the [Saṅgha](#), the double talker, after death, will fall to hell and, for hundreds and thousands of [kalpas](#), will not be able to leave there. Suppose he will later be reborn in a poor family and even receive a prophecy of attaining Buddhahood. Then he will eventually attain [samyak-saṃbodhi](#) in an evil world of the five turbidities, just like me who have accomplished the Buddha Way in this world of the five turbidities in life and death. Because of these causes and conditions, you should hearken, believe, and know that such will be the results of following the way of evil friends.

"Ajita, as I remember, countless kalpas ago, a Buddha named Untainted Flame Worthy-of-Name King appeared in the world, who was the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyak-Saṃbuddha, Knowledge and Action Perfected, Sugata, Understanding the World, Unsurpassed One, Tamer of Men, Teacher to Gods and Humans, Buddha the World-Honored One. That Buddha, during His life of 80,000 [nayuta](#) years, expounded the Dharma to the multitudes. At that time, in the Dharma of Untainted Flame Worthy-of-Name King Tathāgata, there was a bhikṣu named Pure Life. He was a great Dharma master, having totally retained fourteen koṭi sūtras and six million [Mahāyāna](#) sūtras. His words were pure and beautiful, his eloquence unhindered. He helped innumerable, boundless sentient beings by giving them teachings, benefits, and delight. Upon entering parinirvāṇa, the Untainted Flame Worthy-of-Name King Tathāgata entrusted the bhikṣu Pure Life, 'You should protect and uphold my true Dharma-eye in future times.' At that time Pure Life, having accepted that Buddha's instruction, for thousands and tens of thousands of years after that Buddha's parinirvāṇa, guarded and circulated the Secret store of the Buddhas. He accepted, upheld, read and recited the Total Retention Dharma Door, and he had profound understanding of its tenets. He also widely expounded it to all the sentient beings in 80,000 cities in that world according to their wishes and preferences.

"At that time there was a great city called Bhadra. Pure Life went to that city to expound the Dharma to 80 koṭi households according to their preferences. Consequently, 80 koṭi people in that city acquired the pure faith, one koṭi people settled in the Bodhi Way, and 79 koṭi people accepted the Voice-Hearer Vehicle and were thus trained. Then, this Dharma master Pure Life, followed by a multitude of 10,000 bhikṣus, went to train in the Bodhi Way.

"At that time, in the city of Bhadra, there was a bhikṣu by the name of Dharma. He accepted and upheld a thousand Mahāyāna [vaipulya](#) sūtras and

attained the [four dhyānas](#). He was converting the sentient beings in that city only by means of the Vaipulya Dharma of Śūnyatā. Unable to speak easily and skillfully, he said these words: 'All dharmas are [empty](#) and quiet. What I say is truly the words of the Buddha. What the bhikṣu Pure Life has said is contaminated with filth and impurity. This bhikṣu is leading an impure life but calls himself Pure Life. Why? This bhikṣu keeps the flowers he has received for his own enjoyment, not for making offerings. He does the same with the solid perfumes and powdered incense. This bhikṣu Pure Life, foolish and senseless, is ignorant that I have long cultivated the Brahma way. He is young and has not renounced family life too long. He is arrogant, faithless, and totally undisciplined. Those who do not have this knowledge say that Pure Life is a bhikṣu who observes the precepts.'

"At that time Dharma, who, with a vicious mind, had slandered the bhikṣu upholding the Dharma, fell to hell after death. For 70 kalpas, he underwent multitudinous sufferings. Upon completion of the 70 kalpas, he was reborn in animal forms. After 60 kalpas, he encountered Fragrant Jewel Light Buddha, under whom Dharma activated his bodhi mind. He continued to be reborn in animal forms for 90,000 lives. After these 90,000 lives, he was reborn in human forms. For 60,000 lives, he did not have a tongue and lived in poverty and sordidness.

"[On the other hand,] the bhikṣu Pure Life, having gained pure faith in the Dharma, continued to pronounce the Dharma. Subsequently, he came upon 63 nayuta Buddhas. As a Dharma master with the [five transcendental powers](#), he always requested each Buddha to turn the wondrous [Dharma wheel](#).

"Ajita, you should know this. Was the bhikṣu Pure Life in the past a different person? Do not view him as someone different. He is none other than Amitābha Buddha today. Ajita, you should know this. Was the bhikṣu Dharma in the past a different person? Do not view him as someone different. He is none other than I today. Because I had slandered Him out of foolishness and senselessness, I have suffered so. Because of these karmic causes and conditions, I have attained samyak-saṃbodhi in this world of the five turbidities. Therefore, Ajita, if there are Bodhisattvas who double talk with respect to the Dharma, they will, for these causes and conditions, eventually accomplish the Buddha Way in a world of the five turbidities. There will be [māras](#) in their Buddha Lands, constantly causing obstructions and making trouble when they expound the Dharma."

When the huge assembly had heard the Buddha's words, they all wept in grief, tears flowing and noses running. They all said these words: "May we refrain from double talk with respect to the Dharma, like the bhikṣu Dharma!"

At that time 100 Bodhisattvas in the assembly rose from their seats, knelt on their right knees, and cried loudly in sorrow, shedding tears. Then the World-Honored One, who knew the reason, still asked these Bodhisattvas, "Good men, why do you all cry miserably like this?"

Then these Bodhisattvas replied in one tone to the Buddha: "World-Honored One, we see in ourselves also such evil [karmic hindrances](#)."

In confirmation the World-Honored One spoke these words: "Indeed, indeed. In the past you had renounced family life in the Dharma of Dīpaṅkara Buddha. After the parinirvāṇa of Dīpaṅkara Buddha, there was a bhikṣu named Knowledge Accumulation, and you all slandered this bhikṣu. For this reason, you have since been unable to see Buddhas, unable to activate your bodhi mind, and unable to acquire [dhāraṇīs](#) and samādhis. From now on, you all will settle in the Bodhi Way. Good men, under the last Buddha in this Worthy Kalpa, you will come to the [Enduring Realization of the No-birth of Dharmas](#). Afterwards, you will walk the Bodhisattva Way for over three [asaṃkhyeya](#) kalpas, and then you should attain [anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi](#).

"Therefore, good men, when Bodhisattvas see other Bodhisattvas, they should not think of selves versus others. Instead, they should think that others are like pagodas, like Buddhas. Hence, when Bodhisattvas see other Bodhisattvas, they should not have discriminatory thoughts, considering others as non-Buddhas. Any discriminatory thoughts are self-harming. You should accept and uphold this [instruction]. Without alienating thoughts, you should join others in harmony. If I held the view that Bodhisattvas who have newly made their resolve would be less than the Buddha, I would be deceiving innumerable asaṃkhyeyas of Buddhas of the present, in the ten directions. Therefore, good men, Bodhisattvas' acquiring of dhāraṇīs and samādhis in the future, in a world of the five turbidities, will all be by virtue of the awesome powers of the Buddha. Hence, good men, slandering a Dharma master is no different from slandering the Buddha. Good men, after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa, if there is a Dharma master who can expound the Dharma well according to the preferences [of the listeners] and is able to have Bodhisattvas study the Mahāyāna doctrine and to have the multitude feel joy as little as a hair and even be moved to drop only one tear, you should know that it will all be by virtue of the Buddha's spiritual powers.

"Suppose a fool who is not a Bodhisattva but claims to be a Bodhisattva slanders a real Bodhisattva and his actions, even uttering these words: 'What does he know? What does he understand?' Maitreya, I remember in the past, in [Jambudvīpa](#), when I was learning to be a Bodhisattva, I loved and treasured the Dharma. For the sake of a verse or a stanza, I abandoned my head, eyes, wife, and throne, which I cherished. Why? It was for seeking the Dharma! As for the

fools who seek only fame, benefits, and worship, they, satisfied with their own limited capacity, do not go to the one who teaches the Dharma of the Tathāgata, to hear and receive the true Dharma. Maitreya, if the slanderers and the slandered join in harmony, they will be able to uphold and circulate my Dharma. If the two groups are in conflict and in dispute, the true Dharma will not prevail. Ajita, you can observe those who slander the Dharma. They have performed such massive sinful karma that they will go down to the three evil life-paths, from which it is hard to escape.

"Furthermore, Ajita, in the time since I initially attained Buddhahood, with wonderful wisdom I have widely expounded the true Dharma to sentient beings. Suppose there are fools who do not believe or accept the Buddha's words, just like that bhikṣu Dharma. Although he had read and recited a thousand Mahāyāna sūtras, explained them to others, and attained the four dhyānas, because of his slander of another, he underwent horrendous sufferings for 70 kalpas. Not to mention those who, foolish and sordid, without any actual knowledge [of the Dharma], proclaim these words: 'I am a Dharma master who clearly understands Mahāyāna and can widely spread it.' They slander the true Dharma master, saying that he has no understanding. For self-elevation, they also slander the Buddha Dharma. If those fools falsely criticize even a four-verse stanza in the Buddha's Mahāyāna teachings, we should know that, for this karma, they will definitely fall to hell. Why? Because they slander the Buddha Dharma and the Dharma master. For this reason, they will always keep to the evil life-paths, never to see the Buddha. Because they have slandered the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha, they can also create obstacles for others who have newly activated their bodhi mind, causing them to abandon the correct Way. We should know that those who adorn themselves with enormous sinful karma will fall to hell, to receive horrendous retributions for immeasurable kalpas. Fixing an evil eye on one who has activated the bodhi mind will result in the retribution of no eyes. Slandering one who has activated the bodhi mind will result in the retribution of no tongue. Ajita, I have never seen an evil dharma that is graver than the sin of sabotaging the activation of the bodhi mind. Even for this sin, one will go down to the evil life-paths. Not to mention [the sin of] slandering other Bodhisattvas.

"Bodhisattvas should explain the Dharma truthfully to sentient beings, not holding views such as annihilation or eternity, the definite existence or definite nonexistence of sentient beings, or the existence or nonexistence of all dharmas. Ajita, those who are learning to be Bodhisattvas should stand their ground. Continuing this way is a pure and good karma of Bodhisattvas. They do not cling to what they cultivate and accumulate. If sentient beings cling to anything, we should know that they will be reborn in the world of the five turbidities.

"Furthermore, there are Bodhisattvas who excel in pronouncing various

kinds of Dharma to sentient beings according to their natures and desires. Ajita, Bodhisattvas who cultivate all six pāramitās this way will then be able to attain the unsurpassed bodhi. The fools who believe in what they themselves adhere to may say these words: 'Bodhisattvas should study only prajñā-pāramitā. Do not study other pāramitās because prajñā-pāramitā is the supreme.' This statement is incorrect. Why? Ajita, when the king Kāśaka in the past was learning to be a Bodhisattva, he abandoned his head, eyes, bone marrow, and brain, which he cherished. Did this king, at that time, not have any wisdom?"

Maitreya replied to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, truly as Your Holiness has said, he really had wisdom."

The Buddha told Ajita, "I have cultivated all [six pāramitās](#) in full for an immeasurable amount of time. If I did not cultivate all six pāramitās fully, I would not have attained the unsurpassed bodhi."

"Indeed, World-Honored One."

The Buddha told Ajita, "As you say, in the past I have carried out dāna-pāramitā, śīla-pāramitā, kṣānti-pāramitā, vīrya-pāramitā, dhyāna-pāramitā, and prajñā-pāramitā, each for 60 kalpas. Those fools falsely claim that one can attain bodhi by cultivating only prajñā-pāramitā. There is nothing right about their claim. Because they embrace the [View of Śūnyatā](#), they expound the Dharma with such impurity. The body, speech, and mind of those advocates are contrary to the Dharma. Although they explain to others their understanding of [śūnyatā](#), they do not act according to their words. Without [corresponding] actions, they are far from the meaning of śūnyatā. Even more than their kinfolk, they harbor jealousy and are addicted to benefits and worship. Ajita, when I was a [Wheel-Turning King](#) in the past, I abandoned jewels, my head, my eyes, my hands, and my feet, but still could not attain the unsurpassed bodhi. In contrast are the fools who, for the sake of food and beverage, visit others' homes to make their statement. They only praise śūnyatā and claim that what they say is the Bodhi Way, the Bodhisattva Action, and that only śūnyatā is the true Dharma while all other Dharmas are not. They also say these words: 'My understanding has been realized by and known to innumerable Dharma masters.' For the sake of fame, they praise themselves, saying that they clearly understand hatred and jealousy. Ajita, I see those who set their minds on seeking benefits and worship for a livelihood. Albeit they maintain good conduct for 100 kalpas, they will not be able to develop even a little [Endurance in the Dharma](#), not to mention attaining the unsurpassed bodhi. Ajita, I do not pronounce bodhi to the deceitful ones who have contradictory mind and speech. Nor to those who are jealous; nor to those who are arrogant and disrespectful; nor to those who are faithless; nor to those who are untamed; nor to those who engage in sexual misconduct; nor to those who believe that they are right and others wrong. Ajita, those fools, out of

[arrogance](#), claim that they have surpassed the Buddha. They falsely criticize the Mahāyāna sūtras pronounced by the Buddha, alleging that these are actually pronounced by the voice-hearers of the Small Vehicle."

At that time the Buddha told the Venerable Subhūti, "You should not pronounce prajñā-pāramitā to those who adhere to the view of dualism."

Subhūti said to the Buddha, "No, indeed, World-Honored One, as the Buddha says."

The Buddha said, "Indeed, Subhūti, giving without being attached [to the giver, the recipient, or the object given] is called bodhi."

Subhūti said, "Indeed, World-Honored One."

The Buddha said, "Subhūti, giving without praising oneself and criticizing others is called bodhi."

Subhūti said, "Indeed, World-Honored One."

The Buddha said, "Subhūti, when you see the fools who, for the love of their kinfolk, greedy for a living, adhere to the wrong view of self and its belongings and enjoy accepting offerings from others without any sense of shame and dishonor, you should know that they create only evil karma."

"Furthermore, Ajita, Bodhisattvas should have no fear of all dharmas. Do not fear all Pratyekabuddha Dharmas, all Voice-Hearer Dharmas, all Ordinary Being Dharmas, the Affliction Dharmas, and the Annihilation [of Affliction] Dharmas. Do not fear other dharmas such as difficulty in being diligent, right or wrong, action or no action, frightened or not frightened, existence or nonexistence, mind or no mind, enlightenment or no enlightenment, karma or no karma, goodness or non-goodness, peace or no peace, liberation or no liberation, training or not training, dharma or non-dharma, quiet or turmoil, false or real, faith or no faith, good thoughts or non-good thoughts, staying or not staying. In this way Bodhisattvas do not have fear of all dharmas. Ajita, because I have trained in the past in such Fearless Dharmas, I have attained samyak-saṃbodhi. I can know the mental states of all sentient beings without the appearance of knowing what I know. I expound what I have realized according to the capacities of the Bodhisattvas, enabling those who have heard the Dharma to acquire the Radiant Dhāraṇī Seal. Having acquired this Dharma Seal, they will never [regress](#). If one does not really know this [Fearless] Dharma and speaks without eloquence, one will not ultimately attain the unsurpassed bodhi.

"Ajita, when I expound this Dharma to the sentient beings here under the Four Heavens, by virtue of the spiritual powers of the Buddha, each of them sees Śākyamuni Tathāgata expound the Dharma only to him. In the same way, from one heaven to the next, up to [Akanistha Heaven](#), each of the sentient beings there also says that the Tathāgata pronounces the Dharma only to him. It is like this, ranging from a small world with four continents to even a Three-Thousand Large Thousandfold world. All sentient beings here have this thought: 'Śākyamuni Buddha has come to be born in my country, and He turns the Great Dharma Wheel only for me.' Ajita, in the morning, using great skill, I observe everywhere sentient beings in the immeasurable, boundless worlds and expound the Dharma to those that should be converted. In the midday and in the evening, I observe sentient beings impartially with my Dharma-eye and expound all Dharmas in their worlds. Such are the states of innumerable Buddhas! All sentient beings that are learning to be Bodhisattvas should train this way. Those fools who slander the true Dharma pronounced by the Buddha mistakenly hold their interpretation as true. Those who slander the Dharma do not believe in the Buddha. Because of this evil karma, they will fall to hell to undergo multitudinous sufferings, never to hear the Dharma. Furthermore, Ajita, you should accept and uphold the secret teachings of the Tathāgata and pronounce them widely and skillfully to others."

At that time Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas such as Mañjuśrī the Youth, Fortune Light Impartial Bodhisattva, No Doubt Bodhisattva, Definite Resolve Bodhisattva, Wonder Mind Open Intellect Bodhisattva, Radiance Bodhisattva, Joyful King Bodhisattva, Fearless Bodhisattva, Thoughts Reaching Boundless Buddha Lands Bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, Fragrant Elephant Bodhisattva, Annihilating All Evil Karma Bodhisattva, Staying in Samādhi Bodhisattva, Hundred Thousand Virtue Adorned Bodhisattva, Wonderful Tone Heard Afar Bodhisattva, All Knowledge Unforgotten Bodhisattva, Great Name Shaking Jeweled Banner Adorned Bodhisattva, Seeking All Dharma Bodhisattva, Staying in the Buddha State Bodhisattva, Moonlight Adorned Bodhisattva, and Great Multitude in All the World Adorned Bodhisattva said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, indeed, indeed, truly as Your Holiness says, when we passed Buddha Lands in the east, which were as numerous as the sands of 60 Ganges, and reverently made obeisance to those Buddhas, we saw only Śākyamuni Buddha appearing in each of those worlds. We then roamed everywhere in the ten directions for seven days and still saw only Śākyamuni Buddha appearing in each world, not other Buddhas. After traveling everywhere, we have returned to this land to hear and accept the true Dharma."

At that time the Buddha told Mañjuśrī the Youth, "Now observe carefully. The wisdom of the Tathāgata is inconceivable, and the state of the Tathāgata also inconceivable. Such unequaled states are the Dharma of the Tathāgata. Those fools say these words, 'Only prajñā-pāramitā is the Tathāgata Action, the

Bodhisattva Action, and the Sweet Nectar Action."

The Buddha told Mañjuśrī, "Their words are in contradiction to the Dharma. Why? It is very difficult to fulfill totally the Dharma of Bodhisattva Action. Acting without being attached is the Bodhisattva Action; acting without adhering to the wrong view of self and its belongings is the Bodhisattva Action; acting with the understanding of śūnyatā is the Bodhisattva Action, and acting with [the understanding of] the emptiness of appearances is the Bodhisattva Action. Mañjuśrī, actions such as these are the Bodhisattva Action. Those learning to be Bodhisattvas should accept and uphold it. If those fools embrace the evil views, you should know that they do not understand my Dharma. Mañjuśrī, you and other Bodhisattvas should guard and protect your body and speech. Do not allow them to dissipate in unwholesome dharmas. Fortify your minds and keep them from regressing. As you expound the Dharma to sentient beings completely, you should stand firm in the Dharma. Since I fully attained the unsurpassed bodhi distant asaṃkhyeya kalpas ago, I have widely and skillfully pronounced the Dharma, enabling sentient beings to stay far away from the evil life-journeys.

"Mañjuśrī, if there are fools who slander the wondrous Dharma, they have actually slandered the Buddha as well as the Saṅgha. To make a statement that 'This Dharma is correct; that Dharma is incorrect' is called slandering the Dharma. To make a statement that 'This Dharma is pronounced for Bodhisattvas; this Dharma is pronounced for voice-hearers' is also called slandering the Dharma. To make a statement that 'these are Bodhisattva studies; these are not Bodhisattva studies' is also called slandering the Dharma. Furthermore, to make a statement that 'The past Buddha is gone, the future Buddha has not yet arrived, and the present Buddha is not staying; only I have acquired the Dhāraṇī Dharma' is also called slandering the Dharma. Because of slandering the Dharma, their claim to have acquired the Dhāraṇī is an impure dharma. They slander what a true Dharma master is cultivating. They further slander the Dharma master, saying that although he has intellectual understanding, his actions are inconsistent with his words. They further slander the Dharma master, saying that his actions are against the Way. They further slander the Dharma master, saying that his body does not observe the precepts. They further slander the Dharma master, saying that his mind has no wisdom. They further slander the Dharma master, saying that his intellect has no clear understanding. They further slander the Dharma master, saying that his speech is devoid of eloquence. Their minds do not believe or accept the words spoken by the Tathāgata. They also say, 'This sūtra is correct; this sūtra is incorrect; this stanza is correct; this stanza is incorrect; this Dharma is credible; this Dharma is not credible.' They willfully rebut what is explained correctly. They obstruct those who listen to the true Dharma, making claims such as 'This is the right action; this is the wrong action; this is an accomplishment; this is not an accomplishment; this is the right time; this is the wrong time.' These statements

are all called slanders of the Dharma.

"Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, whether voice-hearers pronounce the Dharma, whether Bodhisattvas pronounce the Dharma, we should know that it is entirely by virtue of the awesome spiritual power of the Tathāgata's protection and consideration, enabling the Bodhisattvas and others to say what they say. Mañjuśrī, even now the fools slander the Buddha. After my parinirvāṇa, how can Dharma masters who accept and uphold my Dharma not be slandered by them? Why? Because these fools are the retinue of the māras! We should know that they will go down to the evil life-paths. As these fools greedily seek benefits and worship to support their kinfolk, they not only have no faith in the Dharma of the Tathāgata, but also destroy the Dharma taught by the Tathāgata. Their kinfolk, with a clannish mind, go to the houses of Brahmins and Elders to praise these fools, claiming that they know and understand the Dharma and its meanings and that they are good at explanations because they know the capacities and desires of others. These fools accept others' trust and offerings without any sense of shame or dishonor. Because they slander the Dharma, both they and their retinues will fall to hell.

"Mañjuśrī, I do not pronounce the Bodhisattva Action to those who are faithless. Nor do I pronounce the pure Dharma to those who are attached to family life. Nor do I pronounce the Liberation Dharma to those who adhere to the view of dualism. Nor do I pronounce the Casting-off Suffering Dharma to those who adhere to the view of monism. Nor do I pronounce the true pure Dharma to those who delight in the mundane world.

"Mañjuśrī, with a mind clinging to nothing, I expound to people as many Dharma Doors as the sands of the Ganges. Then with a mind seemingly attached to something, I also expound to sentient beings as many Dharma Doors as the sands of the Ganges. If sentient beings delight in śūnyatā, I pronounce to them the Dharma of Emptiness. If sentient beings delight in knowledge, I pronounce to them the Dharma of Knowledge. If sentient beings delight in no-appearance, I pronounce to them the Dharma of No-appearance. If sentient beings delight in appearance, I pronounce to them the Dharma of Appearance. If sentient beings delight in lovingkindness, I pronounce to them the Dharma of Lovingkindness. If sentient beings delight in causality, I pronounce to them the Dharma of Causality. If sentient beings delight in no-causality, I pronounce to them the Dharma of No-causality. [Other Dharmas I have pronounced include] the Dharma of Awe-inspiring Deportment, the Dharma of Non-awe-inspiring Deportment, the Dharma of Emptiness, the Dharma of Non-emptiness, the Dharma of That Which is Saṃskṛta, the Dharma of That Which is [Asaṃskṛta](#), the Dharma of [Drawing in Sentient beings](#), the Dharma of the [Coverings](#), the Dharma of Ordinary Beings, the Dharma of Holy Beings, the Dharma of Forms, the Dharma of the Unwholesome, the Dharma of Fools, and the Dharma of the

Definite."

The Buddha told Mañjuśrī, "Dharmas such as these are the way of prajñā-pāramitā. The words of those fools, which slander the true Dharma of the Buddha, are not in accord with the true pure teachings of the Tathāgata."

At that time Mañjuśrī asked Buddha, "World-Honored One, as You say, such fools, because they are close to the evil friends, step forward to voice their slander. Then, World-Honored One, by what causes and conditions, can they avoid this blunder?"

The Buddha told Mañjuśrī, "For seven years in the distant past, I repented day and night in the [six periods](#) the grave sins I had committed with my body, voice, and mind. After being purified, it took me ten kalpas to acquire the Endurance in the Dharma. Mañjuśrī, you should know that this Sūtra is the Bodhisattva Vehicle. It can enable those who have not realized [the truth] to come to realization. If those who, having heard the words of this Sūtra, refuse to believe and accept them and even falsely criticize them, they will go down to the evil life-paths. Bodhisattvas need to understand and accept my Dharma, and then they can pronounce it to others. By accepting and upholding [the Dharma] in this way, one can stay far away from the evil life-journeys."

The Buddha told Mañjuśrī, "There are Four Equality Dharmas that Bodhisattvas should learn. What are these four? First, Bodhisattvas are impartial to all sentient beings. Second, they are impartial to all dharmas. Third, they are impartial to bodhi. Fourth, they pronounce various Dharmas impartially. These are the four Equality Dharmas! Bodhisattvas should know these four Dharmas, and then explain them to sentient beings. The believers will stay far away from the evil life-journeys. The non-believers will go down to the evil life-paths. If, among good men and good women, there are those who stand firm in these four Dharmas, we should know that they will not have to trek the evil life-journeys. There are another four Dharmas [for Bodhisattvas to learn]. What are these four? First, their minds do not regress from helping sentient beings. Second, they neither disdain nor slander Dharma masters. Third, they do not slander the wise. Fourth, they always respect everything said by Tathāgatas. If good men or good women succeed in training themselves in these four Dharmas, they will never go down to the evil life-paths.

"Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattvas can take the [seven treasures](#) which fill up as many Buddha Lands as the sands of Ganges and make offerings every day for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges to as many Buddha-Bhagavāns as the sands of the Ganges. Suppose good men or good women can read and recite three times a verse or a stanza in such a wonderful Mahāyāna Vaipulya Sūtra. The merit they will gain exceeds that from making the above

offerings—The merit earned by those who recite and uphold this Sūtra will be twice as much. Suppose there are those who cultivate almsgiving, observance of precepts, endurance, energetic progress, meditation, and wisdom. The virtue they have received from cultivating these six pāramitās also cannot compare. Mañjuśrī, the name and meaning of such a Sūtra are so vast that they are unequalled. You Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas should study and learn well, accept and uphold, read and recite, and explain it widely to sentient beings."

At that time those in the huge multitude and Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas who had come from the [ten directions](#) all said to the Buddha: "World-Honored One, indeed, indeed, we will accept and uphold it as the Buddha says."

When the Buddha was pronouncing this Dharma, Bodhisattvas as numerous as the sands of 30 Ganges acquired the Enduring Realization of the No-birth of Dharmas. Bodhisattvas as numerous as the sands of 70 Ganges attained the level of no regress from their anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi mind. Furthermore, the massive multitudes in sixty-three koṭi one hundred thousand nayuta Three-Thousand Large Thousandfold Worlds, having heard the Buddha's words, heartily rejoiced. They would have to continue crossing the stream of life and death for 80 kalpas, and then they too would reach the level of no regress from their anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi mind. At the end of another 63 kalpas, they should totally attain the unsurpassed bodhi. All in multitudes—Bodhisattvas, gods, dragons, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas, humans, nonhumans, and others, having heard the Buddha's teachings, rejoiced greatly and made obeisance. Then they reverently carried out [the teachings in] the *Mahāyāna Vaipulya Sūtra of Total Retention*.

—Mahāyāna Vaipulya Sūtra of Total Retention
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